2018 Impact Report
July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

PROMOTING HEALTH & HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH LAW & POLICY

The Network for Public Health Law
From the Network National Director

At the Network we are hopeful as we look ahead. We see organizations across the country of every size and stripe working tirelessly, despite threats and challenges on numerous fronts, to ensure that Americans in every community are given a fair chance to live healthy and productive lives.

The past year was extremely difficult for so many of us. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria devastated Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, and wildfires destroyed whole neighborhoods in California. Communities found themselves battling discriminatory policies along racial, religious and gender lines. Many Americans feared they would lose their health coverage. Mass shootings took more innocent lives, and the opioid epidemic marched on.

Through each of these and other challenges, the organizations, agencies and programs we worked with were steadfast in their efforts to support and protect struggling communities and vulnerable populations. And this is what makes us hopeful as we continue our work now and in the months ahead to advance health justice.

At its core, health justice is about addressing the systemic inequities that create conditions for poor health outcomes. Law and policy can advance health justice, but conversely can be the cause of, and perpetuate, inequities. Most often the burdens of inequity fall on those with the least options or resources.

In the past year we’ve seen many important safeguards diminished or dismantled, seemingly without any regard for evidence-based guidance or clear reasoning. We’ve seen preemptive laws enacted to block community efforts to address public health.

While it has always been central to what we do, the Network prioritized efforts and initiatives that identify and address discriminatory laws and policies that lead to disadvantage and disparities in the health of communities.

Through research, analysis, strategic guidance, education and collaborative initiatives, we work with hundreds in local, tribal, state and federal agencies, as well as advocacy organizations, community groups and philanthropic programs to identify legal and policy solutions and opportunities to protect health and promote positive health outcomes.

We recognize the critical need to increase effective, strategic collaboration among those using the power of law to achieve health equity. Our National Public Health Law Conference, taking place in October 2018, aims to merge the knowledge and connections necessary for collaborations to advance health justice. Indeed our conference theme, Health Justice: Empowering Public Health and Advancing Health Equity is a call to all who committed to the ideal that everyone should have the opportunity to live in good health.
I have a sense of urgency when I call the Network because of the large number of people dying from opioid overdoses. I need enhanced responses. They can make a huge difference in saving people’s lives.

Michael Botticelli, Executive Director / Grayken Center for Addiction Medicine – Boston Medical Center and Network for Public Health Law National Advisory Board Member
Profile of a Public Health Crisis: Homelessness and Sanitation Protecting Vulnerable Populations from Health Threats

The U.S. is grappling with its worst multistate hepatitis A (HAV) virus outbreak since the federal government approved a vaccine in 1995. HAV is a viral liver disease associated with insufficient sanitation that disproportionately impacts the homeless population. In California, 71 percent of those who died from the disease were experiencing homelessness. This crisis illuminates systemic failures to meet the health needs of people experiencing homelessness, and shows the population health effects of poverty.

The Network examined the connection between HAV and barriers to essential public toilet, handwashing, shower and laundry services for people experiencing homelessness, and created educational resources highlighting the public health risks, along with policy opportunities and promising community initiatives designed to improve conditions for homeless populations.

Under-Resourced Communities and Health: The Flint Water Crisis

When financially stressed Flint, Michigan, switched the source of its water from Lake Huron to the Flint River as a cost-cutting measure, the river water corroded the city’s aging service lines. As a result, thousands of children and adults were poisoned after lead leached into the city’s drinking water. It is an unfortunate reminder that our communities are endangered when health is not considered in governing decisions. Sadly, the harm to Flint residents cannot easily be undone.

To ensure that future decisions made in other communities incorporate the lessons learned from this preventable disaster, the Network partnered with the University of Michigan School of Public Health to create resources to inform government officials, policymakers and community advocates. The Public Health Handbook for Communities Under Emergency Management – A Case Study of the Flint Water Crisis report provides guidance for implementing several key, overarching recommendations aimed at reinforcing the legal authority of state, local, and federal public health and environmental agencies to avert or mitigate another Flint water crisis.

“Thanks for sharing the report on the Flint Water Crisis. It was the most popular document at the session.”
Doug Farquhar, Program Director / National Conference of State Legislatures

“Important work from [the Network] on the Hepatitis A outbreak in the US and its disproportionate impacts on people experiencing homelessness ...”
Walter Johnson, Senior Legal Researcher Arizona State Center for Public Health Law and Policy
Tax Policies to Support Public Health
Spreading Innovative Policy Practices

Tax incentives, in the form of tax credits, deductions or exemptions, can be effective legal interventions for advancing the public’s health. A tax credit is a direct reduction in tax liability. By contrast, a tax deduction lowers taxable income and the exact tax savings depends on a person’s tax bracket. A tax exemption allows a consumer to avoid paying the sales tax on a product. The power to tax is a tool available to all levels of government—federal, state, and local—and therefore can be utilized in a variety of inventive ways.

The Network created a series of policy briefs on how tax incentives are being used in innovative ways to tackle issues such as food insecurity, injury prevention, and ex-offender health. Future resources will examine how tax incentives are being used to promote healthy housing, smoke-free policies, physical activity and other public health initiatives.

“Health justice means everyone has a right to be healthy and to be treated fairly. It is our job as a nation to advocate for policy that enhances health and defends health equity.”

Network member Stephanie Johnson, Health IT Specialist/Michigan Public Health Institute

Mental Health Policy Development at the Community Level
Connecting Community Stakeholders to Identify Paths to Policy

One in five adults in America (nearly 44 million people) experience a mental illness in any given year according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and one in five children have or will experience a debilitating mental illness in their lifetime. While there is ample evidence that mental health is critical to overall wellness, and mental illness can be a root cause of homelessness, substance abuse, injury, suicide and a myriad of other public health challenges in our communities, gaps in laws and policies to address access to care, education, stigma reduction and other interventions remain.

As part of our ongoing work to build connections and momentum for laws and policies that promote mental health, the Network partnered with the Minnesota Department of Health, University of Minnesota Extension, and Hennepin County Public Health to convene over 100 people from a variety of sectors (including public health, health care systems, education, law enforcement, mental health providers and community-based organizations) to engage in discussion about a vision for mental health promotion in Minnesota. The partners plan to share a summary of the meeting with participants and engage in collaborative discussions to prioritize and carry out next steps to move mental health law and policy forward in Minnesota.

“Health justice means my community has the resources and power they need in order achieve the optimal health possible.”

Network member Sevly Snguon, Public Health Associate/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention: we assisted the CDC’s Public Health Law Program to develop an online training module for practitioners and policymakers to understand legal and policy approaches and best practices to reduce fatal poisonings from prescription opioids. We are continuing our work with the CDC to provide research and analysis of legal interventions to overdose.

Traumatic Brain Injury: we worked with the CDC’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Team to develop a coded legislative dataset of state return-to-play laws, along with an accompanying codebook with decision rules (a document that explains decisions made during the coding process about how the codebook was applied to different aspects of the laws).

Johns Hopkins University and the de Beaumont Foundation

We partnered with Johns Hopkins University and the de Beaumont Foundation to develop a report with case studies to illustrate how public health departments might use electronic health data to address childhood asthma. The report, Using Electronic Health Data for Community Health: Example Cases and Legal Analysis, provides an analysis of the HIPAA Privacy Rule and guidance to assist public health agencies and others to assess HIPAA’s applicability to a variety of situations that involve data sharing for public health purposes.

National School Nurses Association

We are partnering with the National School Nurses Association (NSNA) to assist in the development of models for utilizing school nurses to improve access to care and promoting child and adolescent health. Our work involves analyzing the legal framework for school nursing, including scope of practice laws in 50 states and the District of Columbia. With NSNA, we convened experts and practitioners in the fields of public health, law and education to explore important issues related to the role of school nursing in public health. In the coming months, we plan to provide related online resources and trainings.

Michigan State University

When Michigan State University was funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish a registry of Flint residents exposed to lead-contaminated water from the Flint Water System, it turned to the Network. Our subject matter experts provided analysis and training related to legal and regulatory aspects of data sharing and privacy, to help ensure the effectiveness of the information and obviate any infringement on privacy laws.

We Are an Essential Partner for the Public Health System

Leading organizations and agencies around the country turn to the Network to assist with their programs and initiatives.

Kerri McGowan Lowrey, Network Deputy Director, Eastern Region Office, accepting an award from the National Association of School Nurses in recognition of the Network’s work on law and policy to improve access to care.

We Are Grateful to Our Supporters, Partners & Friends

- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Data Across Sectors for Health
- de Beaumont Foundation
- Lawrence/Douglas County Health Department
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- Michigan State University
- Minnesota Department of Health
- National School Nurses Association
- National Association of County and City Health Officials
- National Center for Medical-Legal Partnerships
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National Governors Association
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Safe States Alliance
- Trust for America’s Health
Research & Analysis: We research and examine local, state and federal laws, regulations, codes and policies that can have an impact on health to determine whether they promote or impede positive health outcomes. We develop and disseminate a variety of evidence-based resources including briefs, fact sheets and 50-state surveys with analysis to guide effective application and practice.

Strategic Consultation & Guidance: We provide responsive and actionable guidance to individuals and organizations working in public health and other sectors seeking assistance in their efforts to develop policy, assess laws understand regulations, and advance initiatives.

Knowledge Building & Training: We conduct monthly educational webinars and provide in-person training workshops, summits and a biennial National Public Health Law Conference to improve the legal knowledge and capacity of the public health workforce.

Raising Awareness & Connecting: We facilitate connections between practitioners, lawyers, researchers, experts, advocates and policymakers to foster effective collaboration. We also raise awareness of critical health legislation, policies and programs by sharing research, reports, news articles and other information with our members and social media communities.

Our Impact: In FY18, we reached 91,000 practitioners, policymakers, government officials, care providers and advocates in public health and other sectors. Our work enables them to make more effective use of public health authority, and contributes to the prevention or repeal of policies and laws that harm the public’s health. Our work also supports increased adoption, spread, implementation and enforcement of laws and policies that promote health and health equity.

2018 Impact Highlights

We provided more than 10,500 individuals in public health and other sectors with education and training through 119 webinars, workshops and presentations.

We reached more than 80,000 individuals online with research, reports, resources and other information to raise awareness of laws, policies and programs that impact health and health equity.

We developed 325 reports, briefs, surveys, research articles and other resources on pressing and emerging issues in public health.

We provided strategic guidance to more than 520 individuals and organizations seeking help to address critical health issues in their communities.

Most Requested Legal Technical Assistance Areas:

1. Alcohol & Drug Abuse
2. Emergency Legal Preparedness
3. Health Information Data Sharing
4. Health Reform
5. Statutes & Regulatory Info
6. Maternal & Child Health
7. Injury Prevention & Safety
8. Environmental Public Health
9. Public Health Messaging
10. Vaccinations
We Deliver Value to Our Members across Key Areas

- Access to research, guidance and best practices from the Network’s public health law and policy experts.
- Connections to our national network of leading experts, researchers and advocates in public health and other sectors.
- Monthly webinar trainings on diverse public health law and policy topics.
- Skills-building workshops.
- Public health law and policy briefs, fact sheets and state-by-state surveys.
- National Public Health Law Conference.
- Opportunities to engage with members nationwide for collaboration, idea exchange and support through our conferences, meetings and other convenings.
- Increased awareness of local, state and federal law and policy changes through news, information and analysis shared via our social media communities.

“The Network doesn’t just seek to put out resources and ideas, it seeks to create connections and community so we can all do better at our jobs together. No one else does this for the public health community.”

- Lauren Dunning, Senior Policy and Planning Officer
  Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Who We Reach with Our Services and Resources

4,035 Officials, lawyers, practitioners at local, state and federal levels
1,503 Researchers and educators
1,407 Advocates at local and national levels
760 Health care professionals
The Network for Public Health Law provides visionary leadership in the use of law to protect, promote and improve health. Guided by this mission we:

- Provide and connect people to non-partisan legal technical assistance
- Develop resources on priority and emerging health issues for use by policymakers and health practitioners
- Collaborate with a broad set of partners, across sectors, to foster the use of the law to improve the health of communities
- Expand and enhance the use of practical legal and policy solutions

The Network’s leadership represents some of the country’s top experts and practitioners working at the intersections of law, policy, health care, housing, education, and public health.

“Law and policy are integral to protecting and promoting population health, but health departments and advocacy organizations often do not have the expertise and resources to tackle legal and policy issues. The Network addresses this need and makes great progress possible.”

Josh Sharfstein, Advisory Board Chair

National Advisory Board

Michael Botticelli - Executive Director, Grayken Center for Addiction Medicine - Boston Medical Center
Steven Gravely - Founder and CEO, Gravely Group
Scott Hall - Senior Vice President for Civic and Community Initiatives, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Howard Koh - Professor of the Practice of Public Health Leadership at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health and the Harvard Kennedy School
Rebecca Morley - Strategic Consultant, Healthy Homes and Communities
Karim Schwartz - Deputy Director and Chief Counsel for the California Department of Public Health
Umair Shah - Executive Director, Harris County Public Health and President of the National Association of County & City Health Officials
Joshua Sharfstein - Associate Dean for Public Health Practice and Training, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Director of the Bloomberg American Health Initiative
Joaquin Tamayo - National Director of the Kind Schools Project, Stand for Children
Kimberlydawn Wisdom - Senior Vice President of Community Health & Equity and Chief Wellness & Diversity Officer at the Henry Ford Health System

National and Regional Office Directors

Donna E. Levin, J.D., National Director
Before joining the Network, Ms. Levin spent over 25 years as general counsel at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Denise Chrysler, J.D., Director, Mid-States Region Office at the University of Michigan School of Public Health
A recognized expert in public health data and information sharing, Ms. Chrysler served for 20 years as assistant attorney general in Michigan.

James G. Hodge, Jr., J.D., LLM., Director, Western Region Office at the Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law
Mr. Hodge provides leadership in addressing emergency preparedness and response to public health threats, including infectious disease outbreaks like the Ebola and Zika virus outbreaks.

Kathleen Hoke, J.D., Director, Eastern Region Office at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law
Ms. Hoke draws on more than 15 years of experience as director of the Legal Resource Center for Public Health Policy at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law, a position she continues to hold.

Jill Krueger, J.D., Director, Northern Region Office
Before joining the Network, Ms. Krueger served as assistant attorney general in the Minnesota Attorney General’s office, as well as senior staff attorney at Farmers’ Legal Action Group.

Gene Matthews, J.D., Director, Southeastern Region Office at the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health
Mr. Matthews, who previously served as chief legal advisor to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, serves as Senior Investigator at the North Carolina Institute for Public Health.

OUR MISSION & LEADERSHIP
OUR FUNDING

Looking Forward

In the next year, our focus will be on empowering the public health system to improve community health and health equity through better understanding of how to use law and policy to advance their programs and initiatives. This work will create a strong foundation for more coordinated work across sectors that impact health outcomes.

Public health agencies at the state and local levels have powers granted to them for the protection and promotion of health in their communities. We will work with agencies to help them optimize these powers by increasing their capacity and skills to more effectively use their legal authority.

We will also work with medical-legal partnerships, healthcare providers, public safety agencies, human service organizations, education and youth development organizations, as well as environmental agencies and organizations to build their awareness of laws and policies that impact their respective areas of work, connecting individuals and organizations to bolster collaborative efforts.

We will seek out philanthropic organizations and advocates who are investing in programs to address social determinants of health and social justice issues to increase the impact of their work.

Our 2018 National Public Health Law Conference, taking place October 4 – 6, brings together all these health proponents to learn, strategize and work collectively toward improving the health of all Americans.

WAYS TO ENGAGE

Partner ... Philanthropic and advocacy organizations can partner with the Network to advance innovative law and policy programs and initiatives. More at networkforphl.org/partner.

Connect ... Government and non-government health organizations can connect with the Network for strategic consulting, technical assistance and training on legal and policy issues. More at networkforphl.org/assistance.

Join ... Those working at government and non-government agencies can become a member of the Network to access important resources, trainings and gatherings like the 2018 National Public Health Law Conference. There is no cost to become a member. More at networkforphl.org/join.

The Network receives $3.5 million in core funding annually from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In fiscal year 2018 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018), we received an additional $1.48 million in project funding and earned income from our national conference.

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<th>Source of Revenue</th>
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<td>Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Core Funding</td>
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Program Services: $4.2M

Federal & State Government | $640K | 13% |
RWJF Special Project | $400K | 8% |
Public Health and Other Organizations | $340K | 7% |
Earned Income | $100K | 2% |
Total Expenses: $4,850,000
Please note: the figure above does not represent an audited financial statement.